

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 have been examined. With this amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1-7 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 8-18 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Formalities

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and for confirming receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

II. Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 5-7 and 16-18 for various alleged informalities. Applicants have canceled claims 5-7 and submit that the modifications to claims 16-18 obviate the objections.

III. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for various antecedent basis problems. Applicants submit that the modifications to claims 16-18 obviate the rejections.

IV. Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kamo et al. (US 6,012,124) ["Kamo"].

The Examiner has rejected claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamo.

The Examiner has rejected claims 3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kamo in view of Igarashi (JP 06236964A) ["Igarashi"].

Applicants have canceled claims 1-7 without prejudice or disclaimer.

V. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for finding allowable subject matter in claims 8-18 and for indicating the claims 8-15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and claims 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the §112, second paragraph rejections.

Applicants have rewritten in claims 8, 12 and 13 in independent form and have amended claims 16-18 to overcome the §112, second paragraph, rejections. Therefore, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance.

Please note that Applicants have also modified these claims to correct other possible antecedent problems and for clarity and precision of language.

VI. Conclusion

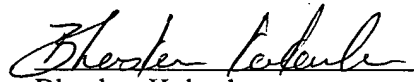
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Serial No. 09/941,710

Attorney Docket No.: Q66039

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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